

Under the Magnifying Glass: No.26 The West Falkland Early 1902 Cancel Theory proved by Malcolm Barton and Kim Stuckey

This article follows on from three previous Under the Magnifying Glass articles; No. 10 on West Falkland Cancels and No. 18 on More on West Falkland Cancels. We at that time postulated a theory that the small distorted "1901" year cancel that was used in the second half of 1901 continued in use into early 1902. The evidence we had a couple of years ago is briefly summarised again below with selected illustrations.

WF.2 Cancellor used in late 1901



Until September 1901 (latest date known currently is 25th August) a large "01" was used to represent the year 1901.

Then something happened to that year slug as between September (earliest date 20th September) and December 1901, the year is in full and small numerals "1901". Often this year slug appears distorted in the cancel. An example of the large "01" and small "1901" are shown here in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – WF.2 canceller for 1901 – left "01" cancelled 25 AU 01, right small "1901" cancelled 19 DE 1901

WF.2 Cancellor used in early 1902

We repeat our illustration from Under the Magnifying Glass No. 18, which showed on the left hand stamp of Figure 2, the date of FE 25 1901. Our theory was that this cancel was actually produced in February 1902. It did not seem feasible that this small "1901" was only used in February 1901, when all other early 1901 cancels used a large "01" for the year slug.



Figure 2 – WF.2 canceller for 1902 – left and centre February 25th examples, right the new earliest known date of the 1902 canceller with inverted "2" of "02" - MR 25 02

The illustration showed two further discoveries at that time that gave more weight to the theory of use of the small "1901" in early 1902; firstly the example shown in the centre, a FE 25 cancel with no year date at all. Was the "1901" year slug so distorted that it broke or fell out, leaving no year slug used at all? The second discovery is a new earliest date of the "normal" 1902 canceller using an inverted "02" – 25th March 1902.

However a theory it remained, especially as there were no known February 1901 dates with the large "01" recorded and no other early 1902 dates with the "1901" year slug.



Figure 3 – WF.2 canceller for January 12th 1902 – the eBay purchase and a Retroreveal scan of the stamp. Also a 16 JA 01 date on a January 1901 West Falkland cancel.

Now a recent ebay purchase has helped proved that the theory is correct. The attractive 6d orange yellow is cancelled with a JA 12 1901 cancel with the distorted “1901” year slug. A Retroreveal scan of the item is shown in the centre in Figure 3. The stamp on the right is cancelled 16 JA 01; it is inconceivable that the Postmaster changed both the year slug and reversed the month / day order between the 12th and 16th January 1901 (and then put the large “01” back in place for the remainder of the first half of 1901). He would also have to have un-distorted the year slug somehow to use it in September 1901; not very likely!

So it is clear that the small distorted “1901” continued to be used as the year slug in January and February 1902.

This information will be added to the spreadsheet of West Falkland cancellation dates, published in the “Online Resources” section of the FIPSG website. If any members have clear cancellation dates to add to this listing, please get in touch.

References:

- Specialised Stamp Catalogue of the Falkland Islands and Dependencies 6th Edition by Stefan Falkland Heijtz
- The Postal Cancellations of the Falkland Islands by Bob Barnes (p 66-69)
- Under the Magnifying Glass No 10 – Upland Goose Vol XXIII, No. 4
- Under the Magnifying Glass No 18 – Upland Goose Vol XXIV, No. 6
- Online Resources Section of the FIPSG website, www.fipsg.org.uk/id3.html for the updated canceller checklist
- Retroreveal.org for image enhancement